

Civic and Monastic Influences on Church Decoration in Late Byzantine Thessalonike

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In loving memory of Thalia Gouma-Peterson

The analysis of style in late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century monumental decoration helps to assemble a cohesive group of painted churches sited primarily in greater Macedonia and Serbia. Rooted in the strong painting tradition of Komnenian Thessalonike,¹ this late Byzantine style is characterized by voluminous figures drawn in thick line, expressive facial features and vibrant gestures, bright colors with deep undertones, and narratives infused with complex theological and liturgical references. That this “new” style can also be traced in churches in the south of Greece and the Aegean islands,² where it competed with artistic practices forged by cross-cultural interactions, attests to its popular appeal and its dissemination beyond the boundaries of a restricted geographical area. The inspiring “hand” behind this new or renewed “Macedonian style” was the painter known to us as Manuel Panselinos, whose work at the Protaton church on Mount Athos of ca. 1290 stands at the beginning of a long chain of related monuments.³ His works are associated with those of the painters Michael Astrapas, Eutychios, Kallierges, and a number of still-anonymous figures that traveled the trade and communication routes connecting Thessalonike with Chalkidike, greater Macedonia, Serbia, Thessaly, Thrace, and distant Constantinople. Style has traditionally formed the connective tissue in constructing a corpus of related monuments in the region. In this paper, however, I examine the represen-

¹ For a discussion of a regional painting style in the Komnenian period, see E. Tsigaridas, *Οι τοιχογραφίες της μονής Λατόμου Θεσσαλονίκης και η βυζαντινή ζωγραφική του 12ου αιώνα* (Thessalonike, 1986).

² See, e.g., A. Vasilake-Karakatsane, *Οι τοιχογραφίες της Όμορφης Έκκλησιᾶς στην Αθήνα* (Athens, 1971); M. Chatzidakis, “Rapports entre la peinture de la Macédoine et de la Crète au XIVe siècle,” in IX CEB, vol. 1 (Athens, 1955), 137–48.

³ E. Tsigaridas addressed this topic at the 2001 Dumbarton Oaks symposium. See also E. Tsigaridas, “Ο κύριος Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος,” in supplement to *Η Καθημερινή: Επτά ημέρες* (29–30 April 2000): 2–11; idem, “Φορητές εικόνες στη Μακεδονία και το Άγιον Όρος κατά το 13ο αιώνα,” *Δελτ.Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 21 (2000): 123–55; M. Vasilake, “Υπήρξε Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος?,” in *Manuel Panselinos and His Age*, Institute for Byzantine Research, Byzantium Today 3 (Athens, 1999), 39–54; A. Xyngopoulos, *Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος* (Athens, 1956). For a contrast between stylistic trends in Thessalonike and Constantinople in this period, see M. Panayotidi, “Les tendances de la peinture de Thessalonique en comparaison avec celles de Constantinople, comme expression de la situation politico-économique de ces villes pendant le XIVe siècle,” in *Byzantium and Serbia in the 14th Century*, National Hellenic Research Foundation Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposium 3 (Athens, 1996), 351–62.

tation and diffusion of specific subjects in order to explore how monumental decoration in Thessalonike's churches may have been influenced by events that transpired in the city in the fourteenth century, how ecclesiastical decoration may have responded to a civic or regional piety that was distinctive of Byzantium's second city, and how the representation of specific subjects within a limited number of churches may have proclaimed Athonite affiliation and influence.⁴ Common subject matter has been the criterion for assembling the monuments discussed in this study. As we shall see, many of the churches cited have also been linked, in the past, on stylistic grounds.

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

The large number of churches constructed in the early fourteenth century and the high quality of their decoration attest to a large pool of patrons with the ability to hire the best available artisans. A painted epigram bordering the sanctuary in St. Demetrios records a crucial repair to the church and testifies to one of the few imperially sponsored projects in the city at this time. The lower part of the inscription, which is ascribed to the Constantinopolitan poet Manuel Philes, refers to renovations supported by Michael IX Palaiologos, who died in Thessalonike in 1320: "This sacred structure, [which was] tested by time and which threatened to crumble in on itself, Michael, the crown-bearer, has brilliantly repaired. Finding its roof completely rotted and its tiles wholly damaged, so much so that they could not repel the squalls of rain, he fashioned it anew so that it appears now, from its foundations, as an astonishing wonder."⁵ Written sources and surviving monuments suggest that projects of ecclesiastical construction and renovation, like that undertaken by Michael, were a regular feature of urban life in the first decades of the century. The remaining years, however, were punctuated by moments of crisis; the number of monuments constructed in or recorded from the middle and late fourteenth century tapers dramatically. The events that plagued the city in this period are well known, but the litany bears repeating in this context: the bitter wars between Andronikos II and his grandson, the Zealot uprising, the defense of hesychasm, severe outbreak of disease, and the Turkish invasions. Some of these events are captured in the material remains of the period. Fragments of a sarcophagus found in the Vlatadon monastery once housed the remains of George Kapandrites, scion of one of the city's aristocratic families. An inscription on its cover, originally inlaid with the family's coat of arms and monograms, laments the loss of the young man to the plague (νόσῳ τακέντα λοιμικῆς ἀρρώστιας).⁶ Excavations

⁴ This paper does not include a discussion of the program of Holy Apostles, which was most likely painted by a workshop from Constantinople.

⁵ The verse begins with an invocation to the Virgin, who "procured the crown" for Michael, prince of Rome, and gave him "a life long and exempt of illnesses" as well as "victory over [his] enemies." In the inscribed supplication Michael calls upon the archangels, apostles, hierarchs, and martyrs. The text, according to some scholars, may refer rhetorically to figures that were depicted within the church. See J.-M. Spieser, "Inventaires en vue d'un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance, I, Les inscriptions de Thessalonique," *TM* 5 (1973): 171–73; M. Lascaris, "Μιχαήλ ὁ Παλαιολόγος ἐν ἐπιγραφῇ τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης," *Ἀρχ. Εφ.* (1953–54), 4–10; G. and M. Soteriou, *Ἡ βασιλικὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης* (Athens, 1952), 221–24.

⁶ The epigram on the sarcophagus has been ascribed to Manuel Philes. A. Xyngopoulos, "Τὸ κάλυμμα τῆς σαρκοφάγου τοῦ Γεωργίου Καπανδρίτου," *Ἐπ. Ἐτ.Βυζ.Σπ.* 11 (1935): 346–60 (repr. in A. Xyngopoulos, *Θεσσα-*

within the city walls have also yielded evidence of social unrest. The quick, multiple burials within a fourteenth-century graveyard lying over the Roman hippodrome may reflect substantial political upheaval or rampant disease.⁷ At least seven of the churches that still stand in the city—St. Nicholas Orphanos,⁸ Hagia Sophia,⁹ St. Panteleimon,¹⁰ Taxiarches,¹¹ the Vlatadon monastery,¹² Panagia ton Chalkeon,¹³ and the Metamorphosis of the Savior¹⁴—and perhaps several others, contain burials that can be dated to this time. These burials demonstrate the desire of late medieval supplicants to be buried in close proximity to the sacred, even within earlier churches, and reveal a funerary function that may yet hold implications for the reading of decorative programs and architectural additions to them in this period.

Traces of the events that so preoccupied the fourteenth-century residents of the city are less apparent in surviving works of ecclesiastical decoration. Chrysanthi Mavropoulou-Tsioume has suggested that the graphic Massacre of the Innocents painted in the narthex of Prophitis Elias (Fig. 1) conjures the bloody massacre of the city's aristocrats lamented by Demetrios Kydones.¹⁵ Painted several decades after the Zealot uprising of 1345, the massacre is depicted in a highly emotional manner, bringing to life Kydones' vivid description of the slaughter of the city's aristocrats, who were forced to jump from the city's ramparts only to be dismembered and abused by the rabble below: "So, as some were thrusting the victims off the top, others, holding swords below them, caught them in mid-air. One victim's head would be shattered, another's brains would spill out, and, upon tearing open

λονίκεια Μελετήματα [Thessalonike, 1999], 63–78); A. Xyngoropoulos, "Τὸ ἐλλείπον τεμάχιον ἐκ τοῦ καλύμματος τῆς σαρκοφάγου τοῦ Γεωργίου Καπανδρίτου," *Ἐπ. Ἐτ. Βυζ. Σπ.* 16 (1940): 157–60 (repr. in Xyngoropoulos, *Θεσσαλονίκη Μελετήματα*, 145–48); Spieser, "Les inscriptions," 173–74; Th. Pazaras, *Ανάγλυφες σαρκοφάγοι και επιτάφιας πλάκες της μέσης και ύστερης βυζαντινῆς περιόδου στην Ελλάδα* (Athens, 1988), 35.

⁷ A. Vavyloupoulou-Charitonidou, "Céramique d'offrande trouvée dans des tombes byzantines tardives de l'Hippodrome de Thessalonique," in *Recherches sur la céramique byzantine*, ed. V. Déroche and J.-M. Spieser (Athens, 1989), 209–26.

⁸ A. Xyngoropoulos, "Νεώτεροι ἔρευναι εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Νικόλαον Ὀρφανὸν Θεσσαλονίκης," 6 (1964): 90–98 (repr. in Xyngoropoulos, *Θεσσαλονίκη Μελετήματα*, 448–58).

⁹ A. Xyngoropoulos, "Τυχαῖα εὐρήματα ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ," *Ἀρχ. Δελτ.* 9 (1924–25): 66–67 (repr. in Xyngoropoulos, *Θεσσαλονίκη Μελετήματα*, 1–5), describes two tombs found in the chamber to the south of the bema. Tomb B contained three fragments of woven clothing, which Xyngoropoulos attributed to the Palaiologan period.

¹⁰ Unpublished. This information was kindly provided me by A. Tsigarida.

¹¹ A. Xyngoropoulos, *Τέσσαρες μικροὶ ναοὶ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης* (Thessalonike, 1952), 16–17.

¹² D. Makropoulou, "Τὸ βυζαντινὸ κοιμητήριον τῆς μονῆς Βλατάδων," in *Χριστιανικὴ Θεσσαλονίκη: Σταυροπηγιακές και ενοριακές Μονές* (Thessalonike, 1995), 237–44; eadem, "Ἀπὸ τοῦ υστεροβυζαντινοῦ νεκροταφείου τῆς Μονῆς Βλατάδων," *Ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη* 1 (1985): 255–309.

¹³ *Ἀρχ. Δελτ.* 43:B2 (1987): 397.

¹⁴ *Ἀρχ. Δελτ.* 37:B2 (1982): 287 and 38:B2 (1983): 281 describe the discovery of a tomb in the south conch that contained a skeleton and two glazed ceramic vessels. For the original dedication of the church to the Virgin, see E. Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou, "Τὸ εγκαίνιο τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ Σωτήρος, Θεσσαλονίκη," *Ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη* 1 (1985): 205–17.

¹⁵ Ch. Mavropoulou-Tsioume, "Ἡ μνημειακὴ ζωγραφικὴ στη Θεσσαλονίκη στο δεύτερο μισό τοῦ 14ου αἰώνα," in *Εὐφρόσυνον. Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, vol. 2 (Athens, 1992), 663. For the identification of the church in the Byzantine period, see G. Theodorides, "Δύο νέα ἔγγραφα ἀφορῶντα εἰς τὴν Νέαν Μονὴν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης," *Μακεδονικά* 4 (1955–60), 315–51; V. Laurent, "Le métropolitaine de Thessalonique Gabriel (1397–1416/19) et le couvent de la 'Nea Moni'," *Ἑλληνικά* 13 (1954): 252–54; idem, "Une nouvelle fondation de Choumnos: La Nea Moni de Thessalonique," *REB* 13 (1955): 116; Th. Papazotos, "The Identification of the Church of 'Profitis Elias' in Thessaloniki," *DOP* 45 (1991): 121–27.

another's belly, they would venture to probe things that no man has a right to see."¹⁶ With the full publication of Thessalonike's monumental programs, scholars may obtain a better understanding of how the Zealot revolt and other sociopolitical events may have affected the decoration of the city's churches.

THESSALONIAN PIETY

In the absence of clear links to Thessalonike's civic history, I now turn to its religious life. From the earliest years of the fourteenth century, monasticism played a large role in the decorative programs of the city's ecclesiastical structures, even, significantly, in the few structures that were sponsored by secular patrons. The chapel attached to the southeast corner of the church of St. Demetrios reveals monastic influence, even if its patron was a military commander stationed in the city. Restored in 1303 by Michael Glavas Tarchaneiotes and his wife, Maria, the diminutive basilica is dedicated to St. Euthymios, the founder of Palestinian cenobitic monasticism. Scholars have viewed the couple's inability to conceive a child as the motivating force behind the chapel's unusual dedication to this saint.¹⁷ Euthymios was indeed born to aged parents, and the first scene in the representation of his Life, located on the chapel's west wall, shows his parents praying to conceive a child. The majority of the illustrated scenes, however, depict his monastic vocation. Thalia Gouma-Peterson has suggested that the representation of the Life of Euthymios within the chapel "demonstrates pictorially the importance of the monk in contemporary Byzantine society."¹⁸ Many agree that the small chapel echoes the standard decorative program of larger churches of the period;¹⁹ this view should be refined, however, to reflect the type of program and its potential audience, that is, monastic. In addition to scenes from the monastic Life of the titular saint, the program includes portraits of the sainted monks Theodore the Stoudite and Stephen the Younger (Fig. 2). Such images are generally included in chapels or churches intended for monastic use. These portraits complement the monumental icon of Euthymios on the south pier flanking the sanctuary, a site generally reserved for the image of Christ (Fig. 4). Demetrios, to whom the adjoining basilica is dedicated, is represented on the north pier (Fig. 3). These panels have been viewed as a visual expression of the military and monastic components that marked the empire of Andronikos II.²⁰ This may indeed be the case. However, there may be more to the decision to add a chapel with an overtly monastic message to the empire's principal shrine of St. Demetrios.

¹⁶ J. W. Barker, "The 'Monody' of Demetrios Kydones on the Zealot Rising in 1345 in Thessaloniki," in *Essays in Memory of Basil Laourdas* (Thessalonike, 1975), 298. Recently, R. Nelson has approached the scene of the Massacre in the exonarthex of the church of the Savior at Chora in a similar manner. Quoting from the lament written by Alexios Makrembolites over the loss of Asia Minor to the Turks, Nelson suggests that the detailed scene may have resonated with the church's patron, Theodore Metochites, originally from Nicaea. See R. S. Nelson, "Taxation with Representation: Visual Narrative and the Political Field of the Kariye Camii," *Art History* 22 (1999): 56–82.

¹⁷ G. I. Theocharides, "Μιχαὴλ Δούκας Γλαβᾶς Ταρχανειώτης," *Επ. Επ. Φιλ. Σχο. Παν. Θεσ.* 7 (1956): 202–3.

¹⁸ Th. Gouma-Peterson, "The *Parecclesion* of St. Euthymios in Thessalonica: Art and Monastic Policy under Andronikos II," *ArtB* 58 (1976): 182.

¹⁹ E.g., see Th. Gouma-Peterson, "The Frescoes of the *Parekklesion* of St. Euthymios in Thessaloniki: Patrons, Workshops and Style," in *The Twilight of Byzantium*, ed. S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki (Princeton, N.J., 1991), 112.

²⁰ Gouma-Peterson, "The *Parecclesion*," 173.



- 1 Prophitis Elias, Thessalonike. Massacre of the Innocents (after *Thessaloniki and Its Monuments* [Thessalonike, 1985], pl. 31)



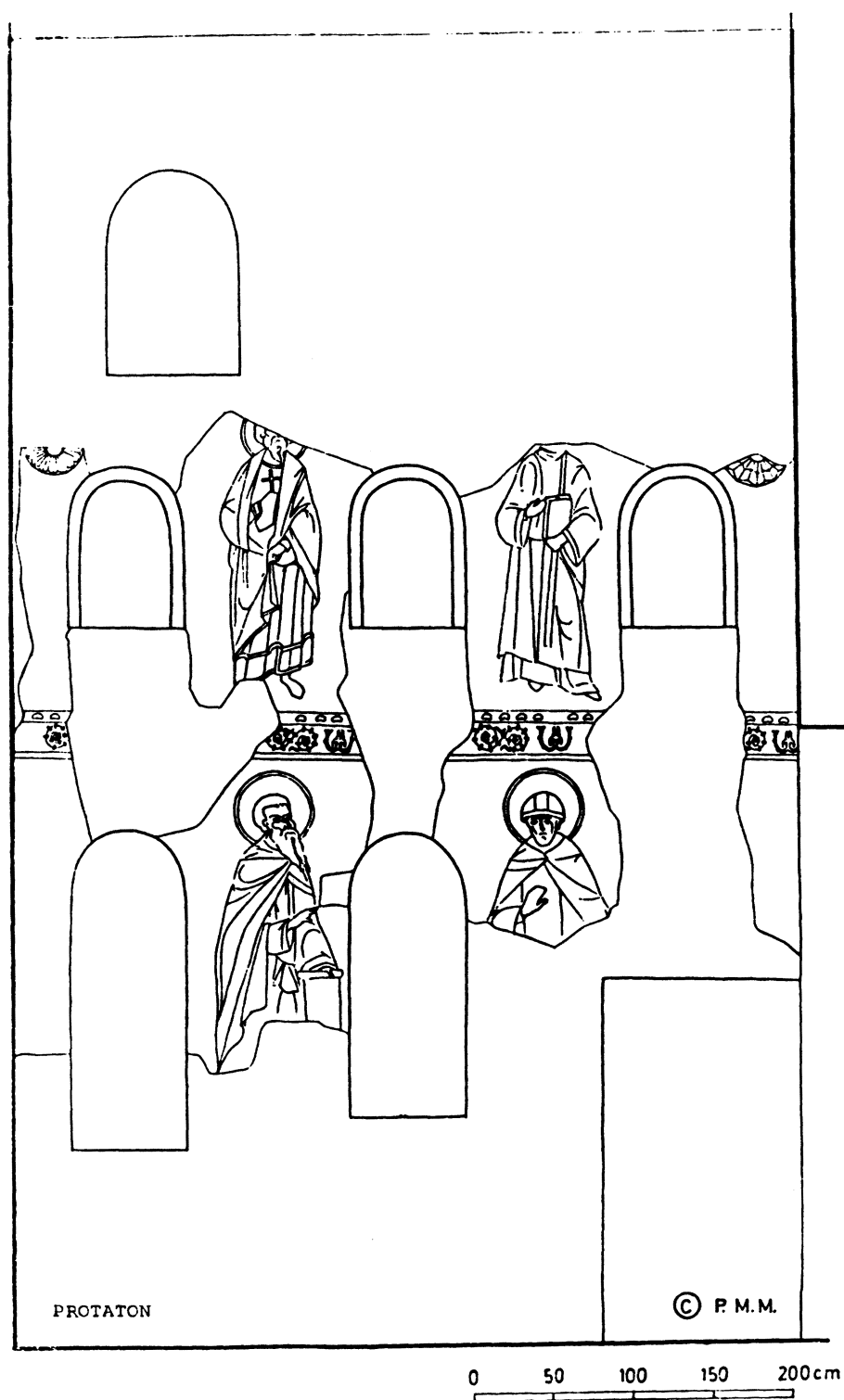
2 Chapel of St. Euthymios, Thessalonike. St. Stephen the Younger (photo: courtesy of the Photographic Archive, Benaki Museum, Athens)



3 Chapel of St. Euthymios, Thessalonike. St. Demetrios (photo: author)



4 Chapel of St. Euthymios, Thessalonike. St. Euthymios (photo: P. Papachatzidakis)



5 Protaton church, Mount Athos. Drawing of northwest chapel, north wall. Barlaam and Ioasaph (after Djurić, "Les conceptions hagiorites," fig. 13)



6a St. George, Omorphokklesia, near Kastoria. Ioasaph (after E. G. Stikas, "Une église des Paléologues aux environs de Castoria," *BZ* 51 [1958]: fig. 5)



6b St. George, Omorphokklesia, near Kastoria. Barlaam (photo: author)



7a, b Panagia Olympiotissa, Elasson. Barlaam and Ioasaph (after E. Constantinides, *The Wall Paintings of the Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson in Northern Thessaly*, vol. 2 [Athens, 1992], 186a, b)



8 Prophitis Elias, Thessalonike. Barlaam and Ioasaph (photo: author)



9 Protaton church, Mount Athos. Pachomios and the Angel; detail (photo: courtesy of the Photographic Archive, Benaki Museum, Athens)



10 St. George, Staro Nagoričino. St. Pachomios and the Angel (after G. Millet and A. Frolov, *La peinture du Moyen Âge en Yougoslavie [Serbie, Macédoine, et Monténégro]*, vol. 3 [Paris, 1962], pl. 116.3, 4)



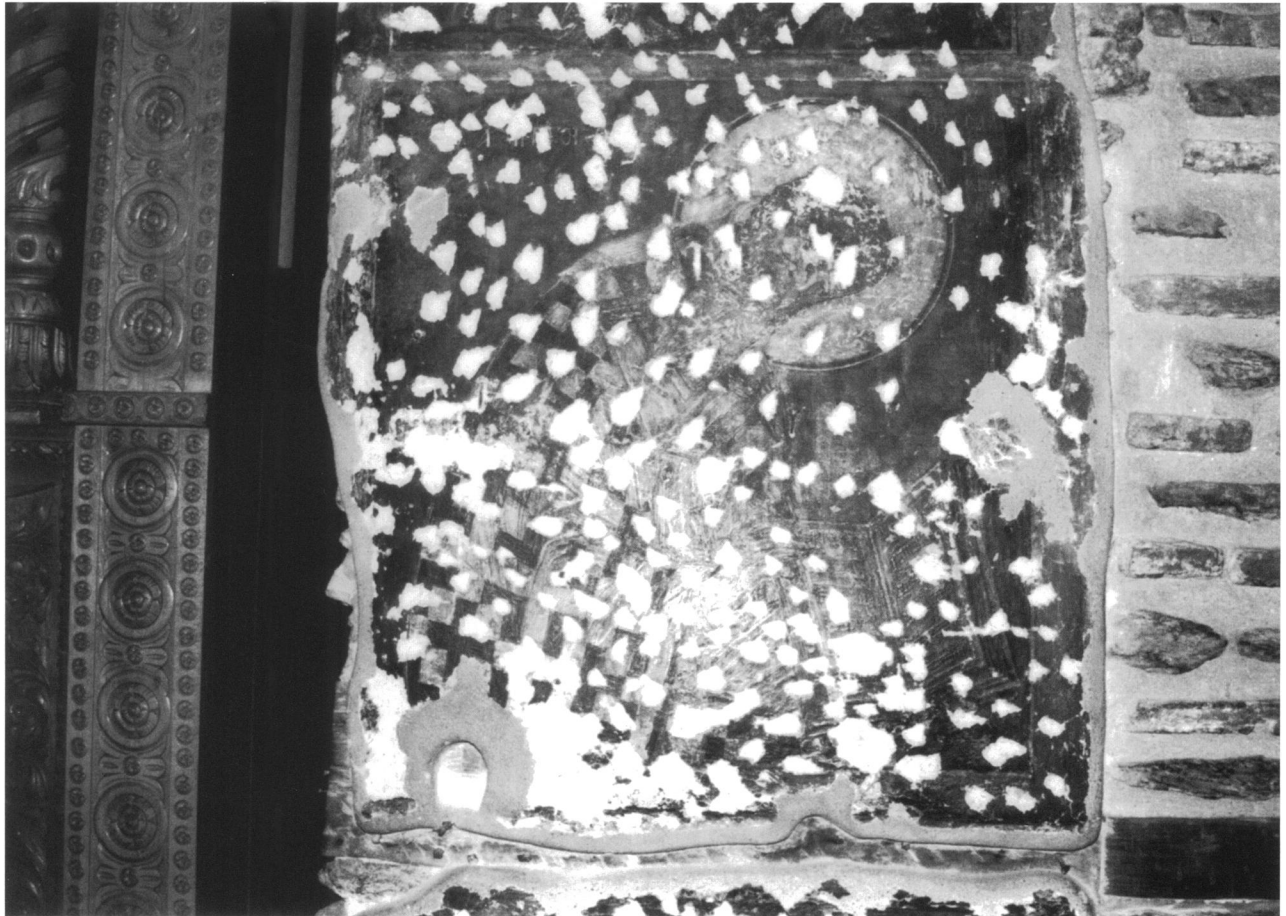
11 Panagia Olympiotissa, Elasson. Pachomios and the Angel (after Constantinides, *Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson*, fig. 182)



12 Vatopedi monastery, Mount Athos. Heavenly Ladder (after E. Tsigaridas, "The Mosaics and the Wall Paintings," in *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition—History—Art*, vol. 1 [Mount Athos, 1998], 274)



13 Protaton church, Mount Athos. Hosios David of Thessalonike (photo: courtesy of the Photographic Archive, Benaki Museum, Athens)



14 Vlatadon monastery, Thessalonike. St. Gregory Palamas (photo: author)



15 Vlatadon monastery, Thessalonike. St. Gregory Palamas (photo: courtesy of the Photographic Archive, Benaki Museum, Athens)



16 Vlatadon monastery, Thessalonike. Prayer of St. John Chrysostom (after G. A. Stogioglou, *Ἡ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ πατριαρχικὴ μονὴ τῶν Βλατάδων* [Thessalonike, 1971], fig. 41)



17 Vatopedi monastery, Mount Athos, cod. 761. Prayer of St. John Chrysostom (after K. Weitzmann, "The Psalter Vatopedi 761: Its Place in the Aristocratic Psalter Recension," *JWalt* 10 [1947]: fig. 13)



18 Vatopedi monastery, Mount Athos, cod. 761. Saints of Thessalonike (after Weitzmann, "The Psalter Vatopedi 761")



19 Vatopedi monastery, Mount Athos, chapel of Hagioi Anargyroi. St. Gregory Palamas (photo: E. Tsigaridas)



20 St. Demetrios, Thessalonike. St. Demetrios and Bishop (photo: Foto Marburg/Art Resource, NY)

The addition of the Euthymios chapel (and subsequent monastic imagery) to the church's program came at a time in which Demetrios' official biography was undergoing subtle expansion. In the fourteenth century, encomiasts writing about the saint began to endow him with the ascetic virtues prized by Byzantine monks.²¹ In praising Demetrios' virginity and purity, in emphasizing his hesychast attributes, and in comparing him to biblical figures like Job, such authors as Nicholas Kabasilas, Gregory Palamas, and Philotheos Kokkinos transformed him from a military exemplar into a powerful symbol of Orthodox dogma and spirituality.²² These texts and others suggest that the fourteenth century witnessed a refashioning of Demetrios' identity within ecclesiastical circles—he was to be not only the protector of the city but also the advocate of its monastic identity.

Monastic associations with the saint and his cult are further revealed in the extended celebration of his feast in October. The festival of St. Demetrios played a central role in the life of the fourteenth-century city. The actual celebration was modeled on Holy Week of Easter,²³ and the month of October was taken over by events preceding and following the actual day of celebration; these were constructed to serve various factions of the city's populace.²⁴ Already in the twelfth century, monks were fully incorporated into the festival honoring the saint. The *Timarion* describes the saint's feast as "celebrated over three all-night vigils, with many priests and monks divided into two choirs constantly chanting the hymn in honor of the saint."²⁵ By the fourteenth century, judging from primary sources, the third day of the extended festival was given over to Thessalonike's monastic community.²⁶ A homily delivered by Isidore, archbishop of Thessalonike (d. 1396), to the monks gathered to honor the saint, contrasts the monastic life with the secular and compares the brethren to the saint in terms of ascetic virtue.²⁷ According to the fifteenth-century *diataxis* written by Symeon of Thessalonike, the city's monks were also fully incorporated into religious processions in honor of the saint.²⁸ Given the unusual dedication and decoration of St. Euthymios and the inclusion of the monastic community within celebrations in St. Demetrios, we might postulate that the chapel served as a small monastic oratory within the city's largest shrine. The visual juxtaposition of Demetrios' portrait with that of Euthymios, one of the most venerated figures of Orthodox monasti-

²¹ A. Papadopoulos, "Εγκώμια στὸν Ἅγιο Δημήτριο κατὰ τὴν παλαιολόγεια ἐποχὴ καὶ ὁ ἐορτασμός τοῦ Ἁγίου στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη," in *Χριστιανικὴ Θεσσαλονίκη: Παλαιολόγειος ἐποχὴ* (Thessalonike, 1989), 134; idem, *Ὁ ἅγιος Δημήτριος εἰς τὴν ἐλληνικὴν καὶ βουλγαρικὴν παράδοσιν* (Thessalonike, 1971), 110–31; B. Laourdas, "Εγκώμια εἰς τὸν ἅγιον Δημήτριον κατὰ τὸν δέκατον τέταρτον αἰῶνα," *Ἐπ. Ἐτ. Βυζ. Σπ.* 24 (1954): 275–90.

²² B. Laourdas, "Νικολάου Καβάσιλα, Προσφώνημα καὶ Ἐπιγράμματα εἰς ἅγιον Δημήτριον," *Ἐπ. Ἐτ. Βυζ. Σπ.* 22 (1952): 100–101; Gregory Palamas, "Εἰς τὸν ἐν ἁγίοις μεγαλομάρτυρα καὶ θαυματουργὸν καὶ μυροβλύτην Δημήτριον," PG 151: 536–58; B. Laourdas, "Φιλοθέου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινοπόλεως, Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Δημήτριον," *Μακεδονικά* 2 (1941–52): 558–82. For a recent edition of Philotheos' encomium, see D. Tsamis, "Φιλοθέου Κόκκινου ἐγκώμιο στὸν Ἅγιο Μεγαλομάρτυρα Δημήτριο τὸ Μυροβλήτη," *Ἐπ. Ἐτ. Θεο. Σχο. Παν. Θεσ.* 26 (1981): 49–83.

²³ I. Phountoules, "Ἰδιορρυθμίες τῆς λειτουργικῆς πράξεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης κατὰ τίς ἀρχές τοῦ ΙΕ' αἰῶνος," in *Χριστιανικὴ Θεσσαλονίκη: Παλαιολόγειος ἐποχὴ* (Thessalonike, 1989), 153–55; B. Laourdas, "Συμεὼν Θεσσαλονίκης. Ἀκριβὴς διάταξις τῆς ἐορτῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου," *Γρηγ. Παλ.* 39 (1956): 326–41.

²⁴ A. Papadopoulos, "Αἱ ἐορταὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη," *Γρηγ. Παλ.* 46 (1963): 361.

²⁵ *Timarion*, trans. B. Baldwin (Detroit, 1984), 45.

²⁶ Papadopoulos, "Αἱ ἐορταὶ," 365.

²⁷ "Ἰσιδώρου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Θεσσαλονίκης: Ὁμιλίαι εἰς τὰς ἐορτὰς τοῦ ἁγίου Δημητρίου," ed. B. Laourdas in *Ελληνικά, Παράρτημα* 5 (1954): 32–43.

²⁸ Laourdas, "Συμεὼν Θεσσαλονίκης," 329.

cism, suggests that the chapel was more than a votive offering intended to guarantee fertility to an aging couple.

The ecclesiastical construction boom of the late Middle Ages made manifest Thessalonike's reputation as a pious city. The picture painted by written sources is one of an intense devotional life that engaged most of the city's inhabitants. In his lament, Kydones asks in high rhetorical fashion, "[What can we say about her] superlatively lovely and sacred shrines and holy places that are everywhere within [the city], of such size and in such profusion that there is nowhere else their like, neither in magnitude nor in multitude?"²⁹ In the city, he says "there are no fixed hours for those who wish to pray, but since the churches are open both day and night, one can come freely to send up his prayers and supplications."³⁰ Kydones' praise of the size and number of the city's churches echoes words written by Theodore Metochites in 1292. What distinguished the city for the young Metochites was its ardor concerning the dogma of truth, the beauty of its churches, and its numerous and great foundations.³¹ For Nicholas Kabasilas, Thessalonike owed its superiority to Mount Athos, which stood as a pillar of spiritual direction for the city, an observation to which I will return.³²

Relatively few of the churches that would have been known to Kydones, Metochites, and Kabasilas stand today, though written sources such as chrysobulls, *praktika*, and wills demonstrate that more than fifty ecclesiastical structures were functioning in the fourteenth century. These establishments included newly constructed churches as well as older foundations that continued to serve the city's populace. Among these numbered the venerable urban basilicas that were medieval parish churches or significant shrines, monasteries and *monydria* for both men and women, small chapels dedicated to healing saints and to holy figures of local origin and importance, and *metochia* for Athonite and neighboring monasteries.

The inclusion of monastic imagery within the decorative programs of Thessalonike's churches can be partially attributed to an unusual pattern of patronage in the late period, one that differed substantially from that in the empire's other cities. In Constantinople, Arta, and Trebizond, significant programs of the late period were primarily associated with imperial patronage or with members of the bureaucratic and military elite—people like Michael and Maria Tarchaneiotes, who also restored a chapel in the capital.³³ But Thessalonike's great patrons in the late period were primarily high church officials.³⁴

²⁹ Barker, "The 'Monody,'" 292; A. Vakalopoulos, "Η 'Μονωδία επί τοις εν Θεσσαλονίκη πεσοῦσι' (1346) του Δ. Κυδώνη και τα ιστορικά στοιχεία της για την ψυχολογία των επαναστατημένων μαζών στη στάση του 1342 κ.ε.," *Θεσσαλονίκη* 4 (1994): 91.

³⁰ Barker, "The 'Monody,'" 292; Vakalopoulos, "Μονωδία," 91–92.

³¹ B. Laourdas, "«Θεοδώρου Μετοχίτου» Εἰς τὸν ἅγιον μεγαλομάρτυρα καὶ μυροβλήτην Δημήτριον," *Μακεδονικά* 4 (1955–60): 58.

³² "Νικολάου Καβάσιλα: Προσφώνημα εἰς τὸν ἑνδοξὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ μεγαλομάρτυρα Δημήτριον τὸν μυροβλήτην," in Th. Ioannou, *Μνημεῖα ἀγιολογικά* (Venice, 1884; repr. Leipzig, 1973), 71; A. Papadopoulos, "Νικόλαος Καβάσιλας: Φιλομόναχος καὶ Φιλομάρτυς," in *Πρακτικά Θεολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου εἰς τιμὴν καὶ μνήμην τοῦ σοφωτάτου καὶ λογιωτάτου καὶ τοῖς ὅλοις ἀγιωτάτου ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Νικολάου Καβάσιλα τοῦ καὶ Χαμαετοῦ* (Thessalonike, 1984), 183.

³³ H. Belting, C. Mango, and D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul*, DOS 15 (Washington, D.C., 1978). For a catalogue of buildings constructed in Constantinople in this period and their patrons, see V. Kidonopoulos, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328* (Wiesbaden, 1994).

³⁴ M. L. Rautman, "Notes on the Metropolitan Succession of Thessaloniki, c. 1300," *REB* 46 (1988): 147–59; A. Laiou, "Saints and Society in the Late Byzantine Empire," in *Charanis Studies: Essays in Honor of Peter Charanis*, ed. A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis (New Brunswick, N.J., 1980), 84–114.

Kabasilas' comment about the spiritual direction offered by Mount Athos demonstrates the central role played by the Holy Mountain in the life of the city, a role that affected church patronage. Marcus Rautman, among others, has commented on the unusual position held by the city's metropolitans in the foundation of its great monasteries.³⁵ Many of these metropolitans were recruited from monasteries on the Holy Mountain or retired to Athos after relinquishing episcopal office.³⁶ Iakovos, for example, the founder of the Virgin Peribleptos *tou kyr Isaak*, signed an Athonite act of 1291 as "*hieromonachos* and *kathegoumenos* of the venerable imperial Lavra of St. Athanasios" and served as metropolitan of Thessalonike from 1293 to 1299, and perhaps into the fourteenth century.³⁷

Monastic influence on the urban fabric and on day-to-day life is revealed in the large number of *metochia* that dotted the city, standing as architectural reminders of Athonite allegiance. According to fourteenth-century documents, Iviron had at least six *metochia* in the city: St. Barbara, St. George, St. John the Baptist, St. Clement, St. Basil, and St. Nicholas.³⁸ The Great Lavra had three, Hilandar had two, and Vatopedi, Xenophon, Panteleimon, and Philotheou each had one.³⁹ As J.-P. Grelais has demonstrated, the *katholika* of these foundations could be very impressive.⁴⁰ St. John the Baptist, Iviron's *metochion*, is described as a brick-and-stone church covered by a tile roof and endowed with a two-storied narthex. Its interior was paved in marble, its *naos* divided by four marble columns, and its walls covered by paintings. The decoration of such *metochia*, viewed by visitors to the city, may have played a central role in transmitting subject matter from the governing monastery to its local dependency. The *metochia* might have constituted "places of memory" which, by means of shared imagery, common architectural plan, and particular rite, closely bound Thessalonian and Athonite monasticism.⁴¹

³⁵ M. L. Rautman, "Patrons and Buildings in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki," *JÖB* 39 (1989): 295–315; idem, "Aspects of Monastic Patronage in Palaeologan Macedonia," in *The Twilight of Byzantium*, ed. Ćurčić and Mouriki, 53–74. For a discussion of patterns of artistic patronage in Thessalonike and Constantinople, see R. S. Nelson, "Tales of Two Cities: The Patronage of Early Palaeologan Art and Architecture in Constantinople and Thessaloniki," in *Manuel Panselinos and His Age*, 127–40.

³⁶ L. Petit, "Les évêques de Thessalonique," *EO* 5 (1901–2): 90–97; idem, "Nouveaux évêques de Thessalonique," *EO* 6 (1903): 292–98; J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie: Édition et commentaire," *TM* 2 (1967): 113–15; Rautman, "Notes," 147–59.

³⁷ Rautman, "Notes," 150–52. For the church of the Virgin Peribleptos, today identified as St. Panteleimon, see R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins (Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique)* (Paris, 1975), 386–88; A. Tsitouridou, "Zidno slikarstvo Svetog Pantelejmona u Solunu," *Zograf* 6 (1975): 14–20 (trans. in *Βαλκανική Βιβλιογραφία* 7 [1978]: 153–68); eadem, "La peinture monumentale à Salonique pendant la première moitié du XIV^e siècle," in *L'art de Thessalonique et des pays balkaniques et les courants spirituels au XIV^e siècle* (Belgrade, 1987), 10; G. I. Theocharides, "Ο Ματθαῖος Βλάσταρις καὶ ἡ μονὴ τοῦ κυρ Ἰσαὰκ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ," *Byzantion* 40 (1970): 437–59.

³⁸ J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, et al., *Actes d'Iviron*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1990), 50–52; *Actes d'Iviron*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1995), 34–35.

³⁹ P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, et al., *Actes de Lavra*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1977), 2–4, 69–76; M. Živojinović, V. Kravari, et al., *Actes de Chilandar*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1998), 61–62; D. Papachryssanthou, *Actes de Xénophon* (Paris, 1986), 30. For other *metochia*, see Janin, *Les églises*, 363, 373, 386, 402.

⁴⁰ J.-P. Grelais, "À propos du monastère du Prodrome à Thessalonique," *Byzantion* 59 (1989): 78–87. See also M. L. Rautman, "Ignatius of Smolensk and the Late Byzantine Monasteries of Thessaloniki," *REB* 49 (1991): 159–60; G. I. Theocharides, "Μία ἐξαφανισθεῖσα μεγάλη μονὴ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης, ἡ μονὴ τοῦ Προδρόμου," *Μακεδονικά* 18 (1978): 1–26; Janin, *Les églises*, 406.

⁴¹ For a discussion of the use of memory in the medieval West that might be useful in this context, see M. Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (New York, 1998), 32–35.

THESSALONIKE AND MOUNT ATHOS

The high incidence of clerical or monastic patronage in Thessalonike, the presence of numerous *metochia* within its walls, as well as the city's geographical proximity to the Holy Mountain, resulted in the creation of church programs that were heavily influenced by Athonite practices and personalities. Although monuments in the region have traditionally been grouped by style, the overtly monastic character of the city's paintings, which, in turn, influenced artistic programs in greater Macedonia and Serbia, sets the painting in this region apart from that of any other. Three subjects related to monastic life and rite as practiced on Mount Athos appear in churches of Thessalonike and its hinterland; these subjects rarely appear in other areas, signaling their regional significance. Representations of Barlaam and Ioasaph, Pachomios and the Angel, and the ladder of John Klimakos became popular in fourteenth-century monastic programs, and they appear primarily in churches influenced by Athonite monasticism.

The romance describing the conversion of a young Indian prince named Ioasaph by the monk Barlaam is known from more than 140 manuscripts, the earliest dating to the tenth century.⁴² The prince's renunciation of his kingdom in order to follow his spiritual father and live in a state of poverty and penitence was seen from an early period to express the spiritual wanderings of the monk and the virtues of ascetic monasticism. Although Barlaam and Ioasaph are represented in the church of the Virgin at Studenica (1208/9),⁴³ the portrait group is more common in church decoration from the end of the thirteenth century. Churches in which the monastic pair is found, including Studenica, were influenced by Mount Athos, which played a central role in the popularization and circulation of the tale in late Byzantium.⁴⁴ Important representations of Barlaam and Ioasaph are found in the northwest chapel of the Protaton church on Mount Athos, painted ca. 1290 (Fig. 5).⁴⁵ The inclusion of their portraits within this church's program is significant; a decade after its decoration the feast of St. Ioasaph is first recorded in a *synaxarion* made for the *protos* of Mount Athos, Ioannikios.⁴⁶ In monumental painting, the two figures are dressed in monastic habits and are represented in dialogue; their conversation is recorded on their scrolls. Shortly after their depiction in the Protaton, they are included in the programs of other churches linked by style to the Athonite church. Barlaam and Ioasaph are depicted in the Peribleptos church (St. Clement) in Ohrid, painted by Michael Astrapas and Eutychios in 1294/5.⁴⁷ The pair forms part of a painted frieze of monks, which includes Chariton, Stephen the Younger, and Theodore the Stoudite, in the exonarthex of

⁴² S. der Nersessian, *L'illustration du roman de Barlaam et Ioasaph*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1937).

⁴³ S. Ćirković, V. Korać, and G. Babić, *Studenica Monastery* (Belgrade, 1986), fig. 59; R. Hamann-MacLean and H. Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien vom 11. bis zum frühen 14. Jahrhundert* (Giessen, 1963), pl. 66. Constructed as Stefan Nemanja's grave church, building and decoration was completed after his withdrawal to the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos. His body was brought to the church from Athos in 1208.

⁴⁴ For the spread of the romance in Serbia, see V. J. Djurić, "Le nouveau Joasaph," *CahArch* 33 (1985): 99–109.

⁴⁵ V. Djurić, "Les conceptions hagiographiques dans la peinture du Protaton," *HilZb* 8 (1981): 51, 55, 77 fig. 13.

⁴⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Coislin 223, fol. 307v. See *Synaxarium CP*, XLI: 'Ετελειώθη ἡ παροῦσα βίβλος ἐν ἔτει ςωθ', ινδ. ιδ', σπουδῇ καὶ ἐξόδῳ τοῦ πανοσιωτάτου ἡμῶν πατρὸς ἱερομονάχου Ἰωαννικίου καὶ πρώτου τοῦ ἀγίου ὁρους.

⁴⁷ Hamann-MacLean and Hallensleben, *Monumentalmalerei*, plan 20, and personal observation.

St. George at Omorphokklesia (Gallista) near Kastoria (Figs. 6a, b). The decoration of this monastic church, which is dated by an inscription to 1295–1317, has been compared with the paintings of Panselinos and with works by other Thessalonian masters.⁴⁸ At a later point in the fourteenth century the pair is included in the ambulatory program in Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson (Figs. 7a, b),⁴⁹ as well as in the narthex of Prophitis Elias in Thessalonike (Fig. 8).⁵⁰ The churches in which Barlaam and Ioasaph are represented belong to monastic communities. The relationship of the youthful prince turned monk and his ascetic mentor surely resonated with the Orthodox brethren, and their placement within subsidiary spaces suggests that these icons decorated chapels or spaces used for hourly prayers, special commemorations, and penitential exercises.

Within the Protaton's northwest chapel, Barlaam and Ioasaph are spatially juxtaposed with the portrait of St. Pachomios in dialogue with an angel (Fig. 9).⁵¹ This early representation captures the moment in which the angel appears to the saint and presents him with the rules of monasticism.⁵² The scene quickly spread from Athos to other monastic churches in the region. From the Protaton it traveled to the Peribleptos in Ohrid, following the same route as the representation of Barlaam and Ioasaph.⁵³ The painters Michael Astrapas and Eutychios inserted the scene into another church that they painted, St. George at Staro Nagoričino, where the pair is located on the west wall of the narthex (Fig. 10).⁵⁴ In Thessalonike, portraits of the sainted monk and the cloistered angel decorate the ambulatory of St. Nicholas Orphanos, painted ca. 1320.⁵⁵ In the Panagia Olympiotissa, Pachomios and the Angel are also located in the ambulatory (Fig. 11). Here the angel raises his hand to point at his *koukoulion* and carries a scroll inscribed with the words: "In this habit shall all flesh be saved."⁵⁶ The programs within these churches at Athos, Ohrid, Elasson, Thessalonike, and yet another in Veroia⁵⁷ are not necessarily related by style but by the inclusion of the rare monastic theme. As in the depiction of Barlaam and Ioasaph, the images advocate the virtues of monasticism. Based on the chain of monuments in which the pair is found, the stimulus for this visual apology appears to be the monastic community of Athos.

Like the romance of Barlaam and Ioasaph and representation of Pachomios and the

⁴⁸ E. G. Stikas, "Une église des Paléologues aux environs de Castoria," *BZ* 51 (1958): 100–112, figs. 5, 6.

⁴⁹ E. Constantinides, *The Wall Paintings of the Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson in Northern Thessaly*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1992), 224–27, vol. 2 (Athens, 1992), 186a, b. Dendrochronology demonstrates that the church's construction took place in the middle of the 14th century rather than earlier, as proposed by Constantinides. See C. L. Striker, "Some Monuments of Thessaloniki in Light of Dendrochronology," (in press). I thank Dr. Striker for sharing his manuscript with me.

⁵⁰ The decoration of this church has been dated 1360–80. See C. Mavropoulou-Tsioume, *Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη* (Thessalonike, 1992), 158.

⁵¹ Djurić, "Les conceptions hagioritiques," 53, 74 fig. 10; G. Millet, *Les monuments de l'Athos. Les peintures* (Paris, 1927), pl. 55.1.

⁵² F. Halkin, "L'Histoire Lausiaque et les Vies grecques de S. Pachôme," *AB* 48 (1930): 257–301.

⁵³ P. Miljković-Peppek, *Deloto na zografite Mihail i Eutihij* (Skopje, 1967), 98–100, fig. 30.1.

⁵⁴ G. Millet and A. Frolow, *La peinture du Moyen Âge en Yougoslavie (Serbie, Macédoine, et Monténégro)*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1962), pl. 116.3, 4.

⁵⁵ A. Tsitouridou, *Ὁ Ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος τοῦ Ἀγίου Νικολάου Ὁρφανοῦ στήν Θεσσαλονίκη* (Thessalonike, 1986), 205, 206, pl. 106.

⁵⁶ Constantinides, *Panagia Olympiotissa*, 219–20, figs. 92b, 182.

⁵⁷ The pair is represented in the 14th century in the small basilica of St. George tou Archontos Grammatikou. Th. Papazotos, *Η Βέροια και οι ναοί της (11ος–18ος αι.)* (Athens, 1994), 169.

Angel, the Heavenly Ladder of John Klimakos held particular meaning for monastic communities. The ladder of monastic virtues is illustrated on icons and in manuscripts from the middle Byzantine period, and these were most often produced for monastic communities.⁵⁸ Full-length, frontal portraits of the saintly author, whose precepts for monastic behavior were widely read in cloistered communities, are often found in monastic decoration from the middle Byzantine period. In the fourteenth century, hesychast theologians frequently cited the *Heavenly Ladder* as a contemplative text guiding spiritual elevation, both in its original form and that filtered through the writings of Symeon the New Theologian.⁵⁹ Gregory Palamas, for example, makes frequent mention of the Heavenly Ladder. Portraits of John Klimakos are depicted in the same churches mentioned above—the Protaton, the Peribleptos (Ohrid), and Panagia Olympiotissa—and these portraits are clustered with representations of other monastic saints.⁶⁰

A representation of the heavenly ladder, as yet unpublished, covers the north wall of the exonarthex of St. George at Omorphokklesia. The adjacent west wall of this space, as mentioned above, is decorated with portraits of monastic saints, including Barlaam and Ioasaph. Although much of the composition is damaged, a frontal portrait of John Klimakos stands at the center of the scene at ground level. The diagonal ladder and depictions of three ascending monks are still preserved on the upper registers of the wall. The uppermost figure clasps the hand of Christ as he joins his sanctified brethren seated within the circle of the heavens. Two monks tumble from the ladder to the right side of the composition. Of these, one is swallowed by a dragon, who bites down on the monk's upper torso. The connections between the decoration of the exonarthex and painting on Mount Athos are strong and suggest that this monastery was influenced by artistic and religious developments on the Holy Mountain in this period.

Certainly the most unusual representation of the heavenly ladder in wall painting, and one that would be copied in later Athonite churches, is found in the exonarthex of the Vatopedi monastery (Fig. 12).⁶¹ Here two scenes are placed together: the ladder that monks attempt to climb and a lavish banquet attended by an international cast of gourmands entertained by musicians. The contrast between the earnestly ascending monks and the banqueters is startling and illustrates a phrase in the text: "The preparing of the table exposes gluttons, but the work of prayer exposes lovers of God. The former dance on seeing

⁵⁸ J. R. Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton, N.J., 1954).

⁵⁹ J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1974), 70–71.

⁶⁰ Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos*, pl. 47.2; Hamann-MacLean and Hallensleben, *Monumentalmalerei*, plan 20, no. 21; Constantinides, *Panagia Olympiotissa*, 82, 223.

⁶¹ E. Tsigaridas, "The Mosaics and the Wall Paintings," in *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition—History—Art*, vol. 1 (Mount Athos, 1998), 262–63, 274. For a monumental representation of the Ladder of John Klimakos found in another monastic context, dated to 1211, see N. B. Drandakes, "Το ασκητήριο της Ανάληψης στο Μυριάλι του Τανγέτου," in *Θυμίαμα στη μνήμη της Λασκαρίνας Μπούρα*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1994), 84–85. The scene recalls the angry words written by Patriarch Athanasios I in 1305–6 to Emperor Andronikos II. Complaining about the nobles eating in the galleries of Hagia Sophia during the service, Athanasios writes: "But if certain people come 'to delight in the pleasures of the stomach', as I saw yesterday—when the assembled multitudes departed, they left behind some bones and scraps—what benefit will they reap by assembling for this purpose, and turning the halls of Divine Wisdom into 'places for drinking bouts'? And who will assure them that they will find another opportunity for 'spiritual ascent' and to achieve through prayer 'the deification, which the saints would procure' for us, if we would be willing?" A.-M. Talbot, ed., *The Correspondence of Athanasios I Patriarch of Constantinople*, DOT 3 (Washington, D.C., 1975), 103.

the table, but the latter scowl.”⁶² The phrase derives from the twentieth step of the ladder “on Alertness,” which largely concerns appropriate behavior during the night vigils. The celebration of the night offices, according to monastic *typika*, would have taken place within spaces such as the exonarthex, in this church illustrated by the monumental ladder.

The three subjects appear in churches located within a restricted geographical region. All of the churches, furthermore, were intended for monastic communities. Based on surviving programs, early representations of Barlaam and Ioasaph, Pachomios and the Angel, and the Ladder of John Klimakos are found in Athonite churches. Their transmission to Thessalonike, greater Macedonia, and Serbia may be attributed to traveling monks, to the programs of Athonite *metochia*, or to painters and workshops that traveled the commercial and religious routes within the region. It is important to recognize, however, that the direction of influence did not only flow from the Holy Mountain to neighboring Thessalonike; the representation of Thessalonian saints within Athonite monasteries demonstrates a sacred reciprocity. A few examples help to establish this point. Four of the city’s sainted bishops—Basil, George, Eustathios, and Basil ho Glykys—are represented in the prothesis chamber of the Vatopedi monastery, dated 1312.⁶³ Hosios David of Thessalonike, whose well-known portrait in stone relief once decorated a medieval church in the city, is represented in the Protaton (in the northwest chamber; Fig. 13) and at Hilandar.⁶⁴ In both churches the saint is represented in frontal pose, like the stone plaque. A second portrait type, depicting Hosios David as a dendrite, is found in the Chora monastery in Constantinople and Prophetis Elias in Thessalonike and may owe its origins to a source outside of the empire’s second city.⁶⁵ Perhaps the most revealing evidence of the close connection between Athos and Thessalonike may be seen in the representation of St. Nikodemos in the program of the Hilandar *katholikon*, completed in 1321.⁶⁶ In 1307 Nikodemos had been stabbed to death outside the gates of Thessalonike’s Philokalous monastery as he sought the protection of his abbot.⁶⁷ His cult was extremely popular in the city, where a chapel was built over the grave of the miracle-working saint. It seems extraordinarily fast that within fourteen years of the saint’s death, Nikodemos’ portrait would find a place among the holy monks represented at Hilandar. But this speed demonstrates the open line of communication—both artistic and hagiographic—between the two centers.

No figure better represents the reciprocal influence of Athos and Thessalonike than Gregory Palamas. The strong association of Palamas, metropolitan of Thessalonike from 1347 to 1359, with Mount Athos, where he was abbot of several monasteries, is well

⁶² St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. L. Moore (London, 1959), 170.

⁶³ Tsigaridas, *Vatopaidi*, 243.

⁶⁴ A. Xyngopoulos, “Ανάγλυφον τοῦ Ὁσίου Δαβίδ τοῦ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ,” *Μακεδονικά* 2 (1941–52): 143–66 (repr. in Xyngopoulos, *Θεσσαλονίκη Μελετήματα*, 231–58); Millet, *Les monuments de l’Athos*, pl. 45.1; Djurić, “Les conceptions hagiographiques,” 53–54; M. Marković, “The Original Paintings of the Monastery’s Main Church,” in *Hilandar Monastery* (Belgrade, 1998), 233.

⁶⁵ P. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 1 (New York, 1966), 258–59; K. Charalambides, “Ἡ τοιχογραφία τοῦ Ὁσίου Δαβίδ τοῦ δένδριτη στο ναό τοῦ Προφήτη Ἡλία Θεσσαλονίκης,” *Σερραϊκά Ανάλεκτα* 2 (1993–94): 53–56.

⁶⁶ Marković, “The Original Paintings,” 228; I. Simonopetrites, “Τοιχογραφία τοῦ ὁσίου Νικοδήμου τοῦ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ στὸ καθολικὸ τῆς μονῆς Χιλανδαρίου,” *Πρωτάτων* 7 (1983): 133–37.

⁶⁷ G. Chionides, “Ὁ Βεροιώτης μοναχὸς καὶ ὁσὶος Νικόδημος ὁ νέος,” *Μακεδονικά* 22 (1982): 96–111; D. G. Tsamis, “Τὸ υπόμνημα τοῦ Φιλοθέου Κοκκίνου στὸν Ὅσιο Νικόδημο τὸ Νέο,” *Ἐπ. Ἐπ. Θεο. Σχο. Παν. Θεσ.* 26 (1981): 87–99. For a discussion of the monastery, see Magdalino, “Byzantine Churches and Monasteries,” 282; Janin, *Les églises*, 400.

known.⁶⁸ As in the case of Nikodemos, churches dedicated in his sanctified name and images of Palamas circulated within a short time after his death in 1359.⁶⁹ Representations of Palamas spread rapidly as the saint's cult took hold over the city where he had lived and preached. The earliest monumental representations of the saint are found in Thessalonike; these, and slightly later depictions in the neighboring cities of Veroia and Kastoria, have been studied in a series of articles by C. Mavropoulou-Tsioume and E. Tsigaridas.⁷⁰ The earliest representation is preserved in the monastery of Christ Pantokrator ton Vlatadon, constructed around 1339⁷¹ and associated, in the mid-fourteenth century, with two associates of Palamas, the brothers Markos and Dorotheos Vlatis.⁷² Palamas, dressed as a bishop and inscribed Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ, is depicted on the broad arch separating the narthex from the nave (Fig. 14). Above the saint, at the springing of the arch, is a narrow scene of the Transfiguration. This pairing is surely intentional; Palamas wrote extensively on the apostles' vision of the uncreated light at the moment of Christ's metamorphosis.⁷³ A second representation of the saint within the same church is found in the south *parekklesion* painted, most likely, in the last quarter of the fourteenth century (Fig. 15).⁷⁴ Here four theologians are represented in poses that recall portraits of evangelists or hymnographers. John Chrysostom and Symeon the New Theologian are located on the east side and Gregory of Nazianzos and Gregory, archbishop of Thessalonike, on the west. In his encomium following the saint's death, Philotheos ranked Palamas among the Triad of Theologians, and such rhetoric would have guaranteed Gregory's place within the elevated author portraits of the south chapel.⁷⁵ Curiously, adjacent to the portrait of Palamas is the unusual narrative scene labeled "the prayer of St. John Chrysostom," and this juxtaposition is significant. In the scene, Chrysostom, dressed as a monk, is represented twice, once reading from a lectern and once prostrate before an icon while his secretary, Proklos, looks on (Fig. 16).⁷⁶ On first appearance, the juxtaposition of the portraits of Gregory, metropolitan of Thessalonike, and John, early patriarch of Constantinople, seems haphazard. This very juxtaposition, however, is echoed in Vatopedi 761, a

⁶⁸ J. Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris, 1959).

⁶⁹ Th. Giankou, "Μαρτυρίες περί της μνήμης τοῦ Ἀγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος," *Κληρονομία* 28 (1996): 9–30.

⁷⁰ C. Mavropoulou-Tsioume, "Οἱ πρῶτες ἀπεικονίσεις τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη," in *Πρακτικά Θεολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου εἰς τιμὴν καὶ μνήμην τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Γρηγορίου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Θεσσαλονίκης τοῦ Παλαμᾶ* (Thessalonike, 1986), 247–57; eadem, "Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τῆς μονῆς Βλατάδων, τελευταία ἀναλαμπή τῆς βυζαντινῆς ζωγραφικῆς στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη," in *Ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη* 1 (1985): 231–54; eadem, "Ἡ μνημειακὴ ζωγραφικὴ," 664–65; E. Tsigaridas, "Εἰκονιστικὲς μαρτυρίες τοῦ Ἀγ. Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ σὲ ναοὺς τῆς Καστοριᾶς καὶ τῆς Βέροιας. Συμβολὴ στὴν εἰκονογραφίαν τοῦ ἁγίου," in *Πρακτικά Θεολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου . . .*, 263–94; idem, "Εἰκονιστικὲς μαρτυρίες τοῦ Ἀγ. Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος," in *Ὁ Ἅγιος Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς στὴν ἱστορία καὶ τὸ παρόν* (Mount Athos, 2000), 193–216.

⁷¹ C. L. Striker, "Some Monuments of Thessaloniki in Light of Dendrochronology" (in press).

⁷² G. Theocharides, "Οἱ ἰδρυταὶ τῆς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη μονῆς τῶν Βλατάδων," in *Πανηγυρικός τόμος ἐορτασμοῦ τῆς ἐξακοσιοστῆς ἐπετείου τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ, ἀρχιεπισκόπου Θεσσαλονίκης, 1359–1959*, ed. P. Christou (Thessalonike, 1960), 49–70.

⁷³ For an analysis of Palamas' writings on the Transfiguration, see G. I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man: St. Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition* (Crestwood, N.Y., 1984), 96–104.

⁷⁴ G. Stogioglou, *Ἡ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη πατριαρχικὴ μονὴ τῶν Βλατάδων* (Thessalonike, 1971), 110–24.

⁷⁵ Mavropoulou-Tsioumi, "Οἱ πρῶτες ἀπεικονίσεις," 253 note 10.

⁷⁶ Stogioglou, *Ἡ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη πατριαρχικὴ μονή*, 114–17.

private psalter of the late eleventh century to which two paper leaves were added before 1517.⁷⁷ At the time, the book was owned by Makarios, metropolitan of Thessalonike, and marginal notations affirm the book's presence in the city, at least until 1530 when the owner entered the Vatopedi monastery as the monk Michael.⁷⁸ The inserted leaves record devotional images from the city. Folio 232 recto depicts the Prayer of John Chrysostom, where the double representation of the saint mirrors that in the Vlatadon monastery (Fig. 17). If we turn the page, we see the portraits of three Thessalonian saints: Gregory Palamas, Demetrios, and Hosios David (Fig. 18). The key to understanding the juxtaposition of Palamas and Chrysostom lies in the decoration of the small Athonite chapel of the Holy Anargyroi in the Vatopedi monastery.⁷⁹ Dated ca. 1371, the paintings are roughly contemporary with those of the Vlatadon chapel. Here Gregory Palamas is represented together with John Chrysostom in the *prothesis* chamber (Fig. 19). Dressed in episcopal robes, Gregory is inscribed as "the most holy archbishop of Thessalonike, Gregory, the new Chrysostom and miracle worker." The saint is labeled in a similar manner in the *diakonikon* of the church of the Holy Three Martyrs in Kastoria, dated 1401.⁸⁰ Why Chrysostom? The scene of his prayer in the Vlatadon chapel, the Vatopedi psalter, and a third example in the narthex in the Hilandar monastery represents the early patriarch of Constantinople as a monk.⁸¹ Stationed at his lectern, reading through the night, he engages in the early practice of *hesychia*, sanctioning, through imagery, the widespread use of meditative prayer advocated by Athonite monks. Palamas' extraordinary abilities as an orator suggest further motives for comparison, as demonstrated in the encomium pronounced by Philotheos. The celebration of the feast of Palamas, on November 13, together with that of John Chrysostom is ordered already in a typikon authored by Symeon of Thessalonike (Athens, Ethnike Bibliotheke, cod. 2047, fol. 14).⁸² Once again, the paintings, or rather the subject of the paintings, follow the commercial routes, this time moving from Thessalonike to Mount Athos, and from Mount Athos through Thessalonike to the Macedonian hinterland, where the subject appears in a small church in Kastoria.

Related to these representations of St. Gregory Palamas is a votive panel added to the

⁷⁷ K. Weitzmann, "The Psalter Vatopedi 761: Its Place in the Aristocratic Psalter Recension," *JWalt* 10 (1947): 28–30, 31–32; A. Xyngopoulos, "Restitution et interpretation d'une fresque de Chilandar," *HilZb* 2 (1971): 93–99. Xyngopoulos viewed the narrative of Chrysostom's prayer as a copy of the scene painted in 1320–21 in the narthex of the Hilandar monastery. Marković, "The Original Paintings," 232.

⁷⁸ Xyngopoulos has suggested that the inscriptions on the images point to their execution in the late 14th or 15th century. Xyngopoulos, "Restitution et interpretation," 96. For Makarios, see L. Petit, "Les évêques de Thessalonique," *EO* 5 (1901–2): 150; A. Glavinos, "Μακάριος Παπαγεωργόπουλος ὁ ἀπὸ Κορίνθου μητροπολίτης Θεσσαλονίκης (1465;–12 Ἀπριλίου 1546)," *Μακεδονικά* 13 (1973): 167–77.

⁷⁹ Tsigaridas, *Vatopaidi*, 280–81.

⁸⁰ Tsigaridas, "Εἰκονιστικές μαρτυρίες" (1986), 226 fig. 2, 266–67; E. Drakopoulou, *Η πόλη της Καστοριάς τη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή εποχή (12ος–16ος αιώνας). Ιστορία—Τέχνη—Επιγραφές* (Athens, 1997), 111, 124–25.

⁸¹ The early 14th-century representation of John's prayer in Hilandar, painted before Palamas came to prominence, is represented in the church's narthex among other images of significance to the monastic community. From here, it may have been exported to Thessalonike where, linked with the representation of Gregory Palamas, the New Chrysostom, the scene took on a new meaning—one that would be codified in later inscriptions elevating the Thessalonian prelate to the ranks of the great fathers and miracle workers of the church.

⁸² J. Darrouzès, "Notes d'histoire des textes," *REB* 21 (1963): 238; Giankou, "Μαρτυρίες," 14.

basilica of St. Demetrios in the late fourteenth century (Fig. 20). Traditionally, the figure at the center of the panel has been identified as Ioasaph.⁸³ The representation of the princely monk has been seen as an expression of hesychast ideology and a reflection of Palamas' own biography. Recently, E. Tsigaridas has proposed that the central figure be identified as Demetrios based on the portrait type and the composition of the panel, which clearly copies earlier works in the basilica.⁸⁴ This suggestion must be correct, given the context of the painting and the intense interest in the saint's monastic virtues discussed above. Moreover, in old photographs, traces of a *delta*, *eta*, and *rho* may be seen at the upper left corner of the panel. The identification of the smaller figure to the right is not secure, although most scholars have identified him as Gregory Palamas based on his portrait type and on his episcopal vestments. An inscription adjacent to this figure does not appear to bear the name of Palamas, but identifying this prelate as the famed Thessalonian archbishop has proven seductive nonetheless. Both holy figures were central to the identity of Thessalonike's church, the development of the city's own hagiography, and the character of its piety. Both saints were associated with healing.⁸⁵ Even if the smaller figure is not Palamas, he must be identified as a local bishop of some renown; he is shown in the process of venerating the city's great protector, directly censuring the saint in a moment of religious intimacy. The image of two holy men of Thessalonike complements the message offered by the chapel of St. Euthymios, painted at its beginning.

The examination of several themes in fourteenth-century church decoration demonstrates the impact of monasticism, specifically Athonite monasticism, on monumental painting in Thessalonike. Conversely, Thessalonian monasticism and civic cults also played an important role in the decoration of *katholika* and chapels on the Holy Mountain. This study provides only the briefest account of this exchange of subject matter. In drawing conclusions about the prominence of monastic themes in Thessalonian wall painting, however, one must exercise caution. The majority of churches preserved in the city once served as *katholika* of its monasteries or, perhaps, as the yet unidentified grand Athonite *metochia*. For this set of buildings, a discussion of monastic influence is entirely appropriate. But what do we know about other types of churches in the city? Little of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century decoration is preserved from the city's parish churches: Acheiropoietos, which housed, in the late Byzantine period, important icons of the Virgin and St. Demetrios;⁸⁶ Hagia Sophia, surrounded by small, decorated chapels;⁸⁷ St. Menas, now destroyed;⁸⁸ and the Holy Asomatoi, which preserves no evidence of a late Byzantine

⁸³ A. Xyngopoulos, "“Αγ. Ιωάσαφ—“Αγ. Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς,” *Γρηγ.Παλ.* 26 (1942): 194–200 (repr. in Xyngopoulos, *Θεσσαλονίκη Μελετήματα*, 167–74).

⁸⁴ Tsigaridas, “Εικονιστικές μαρτυρίες” (2000), 197–99.

⁸⁵ Laiou-Thomadakis, “Saints and Society,” 104. Philotheos Kokkinos, Palamas' encomiast, refers to several healings within Thessalonike: a nun in the monastery of St. Theodora (PG 151: 629B; Janin, *Les églises*, 375) and a hieromonk in the monastery dedicated to the Virgin τοῦ Ὑπομνήσκοντος (PG 151: 627–30; Janin, *Les églises*, 413–14).

⁸⁶ A. Xyngopoulos, “Αἱ περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἀχειροποιήτου Θεσσαλονίκης εἰδήσεις τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου Ἀρμενοπούλου,” *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Σχολῆς Νομικῶν καὶ Οἰκονομικῶν τοῦ Ἀριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 6 (1952): 1–26 (repr. in Xyngopoulos, *Θεσσαλονίκη Μελετήματα*, 259–86).

⁸⁷ K. Theoharidou, *The Architecture of Hagia Sophia, Thessaloniki from Its Erection up to the Turkish Conquest*, BAR International Series 399 (Oxford, 1988), 13–16.

⁸⁸ Th. S. Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou, “The Monastery of Aghios Menas in Thessaloniki,” *DOP* 50 (1996): 239–62.

decorative phase. Nor do we have evidence, except in the case of St. Demetrios, for the monumental decoration of the city's main cult centers—the church of St. Theodora,⁸⁹ the chapel of St. Anysia,⁹⁰ or the sanctuary of Hosios David.⁹¹ The decoration of these churches might provide a picture of late medieval painting in the city that was untouched by Athonite influence, painting that may have been more structured to accommodate lay supplicants and pilgrims. For the moment, however, we are left with the city's great monastic churches, and, like the encomiasts of the fourteenth century, we too must admire their number and size and bathe in the spiritual rays that illuminate them.

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⁸⁹ See the discussion by Ch. Bakirtzis in this volume.

⁹⁰ P. Lemerle, "Sainte Anysia, martyre à Thessalonique? Une question posée," *AB* 100 (1982): 111–24.

⁹¹ Xyngopoulos, "Ἀνάλυτον," 143–66.